

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing amendment, Claims 1-4 and 6-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3 and 6-9 are amended; Claim 5 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; and Claims 10-20 are added by the present amendment. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawings were objected to; Claim 9 was objected to; Claims 1 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention; Claims 1 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as incomplete for omitting essential elements; Claims 1 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,683,415 to Compain et al. (hereinafter “Compain”) in view of JP 03-149728 to Nakamura et al.; Claims 1-3, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,583,549 to Takenaka et al. in view of Compain; Claims 1-3, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over WO 01/71760 A1 to Takenaka in view of Compain; and Claims 4-7 were indicated as reciting allowable subject matter.

Regarding the objection to the drawings, the specification is amended in view of the Examiner’s comments. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to Claim 9, that claim is amended in view of the Examiner’s comments. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to Claim 9 be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejections of Claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, summarized above, those claims are amended in view of the Examiner's comments.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of those claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Applicants note, with appreciation, the indication that Claims 4-7 recite allowable subject matter. In view thereof, Claim 1 is amended to recite the subject matter of canceled Claim 5. Claims 2-4 and 6-9 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the outstanding rejections of Claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103, summarized above, are moot; and further submit that Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are in condition for allowance.

New Claims 10-20 are added to recite the present invention in a varying scope. New independent Claim 10 recites the subject matter of Claims 1, 2, and 5. New independent Claim 17 recites the subject matter of Claims 1, 2, and 7. As Claims 5 and 7 are indicated as including allowable subject matter, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 10 and 17 are in condition for allowance; and further submit that Claims 11-16 and 18-20, which depend directly or indirectly from Claims 10 and 17, respectively, are in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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